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Ministry of Forests and Range

ANNUAL HARVEST INCREASED FOR TFL 18 NEAR CLEARWATER

VICTORIA – Effective immediately, the allowable annual cut for Tree Farm Licence 18 west of Clearwater will increase by approximately 63 per cent to 290,000 cubic metres a year, Deputy Chief Forester Henry Benskin said today.

The increase was made in response to escalating forest health issues, as well as improved information that shows trees in the area are growing faster than previously estimated.

The tree farm licence is held by Canadian Forest Products Ltd. (Canfor), which began managing small outbreaks of mountain pine beetle in 2004, and is also dealing with a small spruce beetle infestation. The current allowable annual cut for TFL 18 of 177,650 cubic metres took effect in October 2000.

"A higher allowable annual cut will help Canfor recover economic value from trees killed by the mountain pine beetle and the spruce beetle," Benskin said. "It also reflects information that shows trees are growing faster on a number of sites in TFL 18, which indicates more wood will be available to harvest once the beetle salvage is complete."

Canfor was also asked to consider guidance issued in December 2005 by chief forester Jim Snetsinger to help resource professionals plan salvage harvesting in areas heavily impacted by the mountain pine beetle. The report recommends leaving a higher proportion of unharvested stands to maintain the integrity of the forest, as well as the retention required by law to protect values such as wildlife trees, streams and old growth.

The mountain pine beetle epidemic, the worst in British Columbia's recorded history, will not be as severe in TFL 18 as it is in other Interior management units because only 28 per cent of the forest is lodgepole pine, the beetle's preferred host, and most of the pine is in mixed stands. While directing the increase to forest stands that are primarily pine, Benskin has asked Canfor to look for ways to salvage dead pine from mixed stands so non-susceptible species can be conserved for future harvest.

Each allowable annual cut determination is an independent professional judgment based on the latest information ranging from technical forestry reports and public input to government's social and economic objectives and consultation with First Nations. A copy of the deputy chief forester's allowable annual cut rationale for TFL 18 is available on the Ministry of Forests and Range website at www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/tfls.htm

Under the timber supply review, the chief forester or deputy chief forester must determine how much wood can be harvested in each of the province's 37 timber supply areas and 34 tree farm licences at least once every five years. A new allowable annual cut can be determined earlier in response to abnormal situations such as the mountain pine beetle epidemic, or postponed for another five years if

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the harvest level is not expected to change significantly. For additional information on the timber supply review, visit www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts

Tree farm licences are area-based tenures issued under the Forest Act, and give the licensee rights to manage Crown timber for sustained yield for 25 years. The licensee manages the area under the general supervision of the Ministry of Forests and Range and receives approval from the ministry for harvesting activities.

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